

concept. The history list of the browser can be separated from the history list of promotional messages since these are managed by separated applications. This makes it easier to include a third party browser into the system. The consumer profiles may be password protected. The content of the history list of promotional messages, preferably, does not contain entries from other consumer profiles that are password protected. The content of the history list in the browser, as well as what pages are possible to view, can be restricted by the mechanisms available in the browser. The promotional message may display an offer that the consumer may acknowledge. In this case, an electronic coupon is offered that can be loaded into a smart card that is used together with the application. The coupons are stored in a personal coupon basket, which coupons upon command from the consumer can be loaded into a smart card, for later use in the store or the like. The set-top box 6 can provide the means for using a smart card, which can be used for the following purposes:

- Identification of the household. Using a smart card makes it possible to download all subscription data. When starting the set-top box the first time or power on, the smart card can be used to identify the household.

- Management of electronic coupons. The card can hold a coupon basket with electronic coupons that is later used in the stores.

- Identification of consumer profile. The identification can include household identification as well as profile information. This information can be used when the consumer is not at home, but wishes to use the fine-tuned favourite profile and the personalised user defined services. The later feature can e.g. be used by businessmen on travel, and in a hotel room he can identify himself and then get the personalised settings.

USE CASES

In order to more fully appreciate the present invention a number of so called use cases will be illustrated below including target consumer profile, promo when in television, block/enhance television promotion, test campaign and consumer requested information. For each use case the following applies:

1. A time slot is selected based on a criterion specific for the use case.
2. A group of households is selected based on a demographical data, proprietary customer knowledge, and/or the consumer profile.
3. A selection criterion based on the consumer profile is set up for the group

TARGET CONSUMER PROFILE

Targeted promotions for different consumer groups e.g. diaper promotion to be generated to customer households with small children, bank loan promotion to be generated to households with low income. The time slot when the promotional message should be displayed might not be as critical as in the subsequent use cases. It is probably not a matter within seconds to display a certain message. Here is rather a time period more appropriate. The selection criterion for the households is based on what consumer group the promotion is directed to.

PROMO WHEN IN TELEVISION

Although the present invention provides a method for displaying promotional messages independent of which channel a viewer is currently watching and which are not linked to the traditional promotional breaks, it may be desirous to be able to show e.g. BMW promotions when the car is displayed on the television screen. To this end the time slot when the promotional message should be displayed is calculated based on the start time of the program or movie. The selection criterion for the households is based on the selected television channel and e.g. income. This use case assumes that the system knows what television channel is currently selected by the consumer, i.e. that the selection criterion can act on the consumer profile.

BLOCK/ENHANCE TELEVISION PROMOTION

Blocking/enhancing promotion to be displayed in connection to competing/same promotion in the television channel. The time slot when the promotional message should be displayed is based on the time the promotion is sent on the channel. The selection criterion for the households is based on what consumer group the

promotion is directed to and the television channel selected. This use case assumes the system knows what television channel is currently selected by the consumer, i.e. that the selection criterion can act on the consumer profile. From a technical standpoint, this use case is the same as "promo when in television". It synchronises the promotional message to an external event from the promotional message point of view.

TEST CAMPAIGN

Two different targeted promotions are used and sent to two equally generated consumer groups. The consumer response (hit rate, interest rate, buy request rate) are collected and a report generated on the response characteristics on each campaign. The time slot when the promotional message should be displayed might not be as important from the selection criterion point of view. On the other hand, the two groups must have their messages at the same time to allow the results to be comparable. The selection criterion for the households needs to be made in a way that allows the forecast algorithm to determine that the two groups are of equal size and contents. It should be noted that the system can never assure that the two groups are exactly equal, even if they are from a selection point of view, since the television set might not be on at the time of the promotional message. If only non-volatile data is used for the selection criterion, the forecast will be more accurate. It will be up to those defining the campaign to decide how much uncertainty can be accepted.

CONSUMER REQUESTED INFORMATION

This use case differs in that it does not contain any promotion to be presented to the consumer. Instead, the user has requested some information to be displayed in the same way as the promotions. It can be e.g. an alert when a television program starts on another television channel. This use case differs significantly from the other. In this case, there must be applications available somewhere that implements e.g. a calendar function. When certain events occur, the applications send out a "promotion" to the television. This "promotion" needs to be shown somewhere else than the ordinary promotions.